RAJYA SABHA

Thursday, the 27th April, 2000/7 Vaisakha, 1922 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock, **Mr. Chairman** in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

*461. *[The questioner (Shri Bratin Sen Gupta) was absent. For answer, vide page 22 infra.]*

Visit by Australian Foreign Minister to India

*462. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that the Australian Foreign Minister visited India recently;

(b) if so, what is the outcome of his visit; and

(c) whether he indicated restoration of normalcy after the Pokhran Test in 1998?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir. The Australian Foreign Minister Mr. Alexander Downer visited India from 21—24 March, 2000.

(b) Mr. Downer called on the President and PM and separately met me and the Minister of Commerce and Industry. A range of bilateral and multilateral issues were discussed. Both countries agreed, in principle, to resume defence relations. Mr. Downer extended me an invitation to visit Australia, which I have accepted: With Shri Murasoli Maran Mr. Downer discussed issues relevant to Commerce and Industry.

(c) Yes, Sir. Both sides agreed, in principle, to resume the defence relations which were broken off after the Pokhran tests in 1998. Modalities for this will be worked out.

श्री परमेश्वर कुमार अग्रवाला: सभापति जी, जबसे श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी जी की सरकार शासन में आई है, देश का विदेशों में मान-सम्मान बढ़ा है और राष्ट्र एक सशक्त राष्ट्र के रूप में...(**व्यवधान**) आप रोज़ बोलते हैं, मैं कभी आपको इंटरफियर नहीं करता हूं। अंतर्राष्ट्रीय बिरादरी में जाने लगे हैं। पोखरण के बाद ऐसा लगता था कि हम अलग-थलग पड़ गये हैं परन्तु सत्य बात यह है कि जो देश अकारण हमसे ईर्ष्या रखते हैं, वह अलग-थलग पड़ गये हैं। इस बात का प्रमाण अमरीकी राष्ट्रपति की भारत यात्रा और उसके पश्चात् आस्ट्रेलिया के विदेश मंत्री की भारत यात्रा है। मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से यह जानना चाहूंगा कि क्या पहली बार दोनों देशों ने यह निर्णय किया है कि डिफेंस अटेचीज़ अपने-अपने मिशनों में रणनीति संबंधों के लिए नियुक्त किये जाएंगे? यह मेरे प्रश्न का भाग (क) है। मेरे प्रश्न का भाग (ख) यह है कि क्या ऐसा निर्णय हुआ है कि नयी सुरक्षा व्यवस्था के लिए दोनों देशों के रक्षा मंत्रालय कार्य करेंगे ताकि दोनों देश दक्षिण पूर्व एशिया क्षेत्र में संयुक्त रूप से सुरक्षा के सहयोगात्मक कार्य कर सकें तथा दोनों देशों के नौसैनिक संयुक्त अभ्यास कर सकें?

श्री जसवंत सिंह: सभापति जी, माननीय सदस्य ने जो प्रश्न पूछा है उसके कुछ अंग हैं। इसमें पहले भाग में उन्होंने यह कहा है कि आस्ट्रेलिया और भारत के बीच जो डिफेंस अटेची हैं, फिर काम करना शुरू करेंगे। यह सही बात है कि मई, 1998 के बाद आस्ट्रेलिया ने अपना डिफेंस अटेची वापिस बुला लिया था और भारत ने भी बुला लिया था। दोनों अपने कामों पर लगे हुए हैं। माननीय सदस्य ने पूछा है क्या रक्षा संबंधी डॉयलाग, सिक्युरिटी डॉयलाग आस्ट्रेलिया और भारत के बीच में होगा। जी हां होगा। परन्तु अन्य बातें जो कही हैं, वह जो बातचीत रक्षा संबंधी होगी, उसी से उपजेंगी। अभी ऐसा कोई निर्णय नहीं है। साथ में कोई नौसेना की कार्यवाही हो या अन्य कुछ हो, वह रक्षा संबंधी बातचीत जब होगी, उसी में जो निर्णय लिया जाएगा, उन पर काम किया जाएगा और मेरी अपेक्षा है कि आस्ट्रेलिया से एक दल शीघ्र ही भारत आने वाला है ताकि इस पर कोई बातचीत शुरू हो सके।

श्री परमेश्वर कुमार अग्रवाला: मेरा दूसरा पूरक प्रश्न यह है कि क्या त्रिस्तरीय कार्यक्रम शुरू करने की बात हुई है ताकि दोनों सरकारें उद्योग, व्यापार के संबंध में और बेहतर तरीके से कार्य कर सकें, व्यापार दोनों देशों में पनपे और फले

श्री जसवंत सिंह: दोनों देशों में बातचीत हुई है। आस्ट्रेलिया के विदेश मंत्री जब 23 मार्च को यहां आए, उसके बाद भारत के कामर्स मिनिस्टर का आस्ट्रेलिया का दौरा हो चुका है और आस्ट्रेलिया ने मई, 1998 के बाद भी अपनी वाणिज्य संबंधी सैक्शंस की घोषणा की थी परन्तु उन्होंने ट्रेड पर कोई विशेष पाबंदी नहीं लगाई थी। मैं सोचता हूं कामर्स मिनिस्टर की आस्ट्रेलिया यात्रा के बाद आस्ट्रेलिया के विदेश मंत्री की भारत यात्रा के बाद उनके रक्षा मंत्रालय से जुड़े हुए लोगों का शीघ्र ही भारत आना, यह सब इस बात को इंगित करता है कि ट्रेड, कामर्स, इंडस्ट्री के स्तर पर भी भारत और आस्ट्रेलिया के जो संबंध हैं, उनमें प्रगति आएगी।

DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, in parts (b) and (c) of the reply the hon. Minister has used the words, Both countries agreed, in principle, to resume defence relations. Similarly, in para (c) of the reply he said, Both

sides, agreed, in principle, to resume defence relations. Those of us who are familiar with the English language know that the word "in principle' does not convey the proper meaning. We would like to know whether it conveys a feeling that there are still bostacles. Would the hon. Minister be kind enough to tell us as to what the obstacles, if any are which are yet to be overcome in resuming defence relations?

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, if I have understood the import of the question correctly, the import of the question relates to the words that we agreed in principle, to the resumption of a defence dialogue. Therefore, the Leader of the Opposition suggested that "in principle' is not "in actuality'. I think he wants to know whether between "in principle' and in actuality what are the various obstacles and what steps are being taken. A decision, in principle, was taken when may distinguished counterpart, the Australian Foreign Minister, Mr. Alexander Downer visited Indiaf. Between the two of us the decision could only be in principle. Thereafter, naturally both the Governments consulted their respective Defence Minister. As I informed Shri Agrawalla, in fact, a team from Australia is going to visit India shortly so that a defence dialogue can actually commence. Therefore, the difference between in principle and in actuality has now been eliminated and a delegation is due to visit India very shortly.

PROF. (SHRIMATI) BHARATI RAY: Mr. Chairman, Sir my question pertains to part (b) of the original question. The Deputy Prime Minister of Australia reportedly visited India in 1999. There were some discussions and there was a move on bilateral investment and protection and promotion agreement and mutual cooperation in sports affairs. I would like to know whether this issue was discussed between both of you. Part (b) of my question is this. Indians in Australia especially in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth are very keen to strengthen economic and business links with India, particularly to encourage trade and investment. I would like to know whether the concern and interest of the Indians in Australia was discussed, particularly regarding agro food technology.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Mr. Chairman, Sir the hon. Member has raised two queries pertaining to part (b) of the main question. If I may correct the misimpression, the visit of the Australian Foreign Minister was not in 1999. It was on 23rd March, 2000.

PROF. (SHRIMATI) BHARATI RAY: In 1999 also.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Between May 1998 and the Australian Foreign Minister's visit the routine of visits between the two countries got interrupted. This was the first visit. This was-the hon. Member is right—preceded by Mr. Tinfisher's visit who, as the hon. Members know, knows India very well and who is a former soldier. They have great regard for India. But he had really visited India as part of the commercial dialogue with our country. Neither with him nor with my distinguished counterpart, Mr. Alexander Downer, did the question of sports come up because I believe there is sufficient sporting activity between India and Australia, whether it is in the field of tennis or cricket. In fact, perhaps there is an overdose of some of it. So, sports was not discussed. On the question of cities that you mentioned, development of trade with those cities proper, the Indians currently living in Australia wishing to promote trade etc., yes, these were all discussed, and were discussed in much greater detail, when our Commerce Minister, Shri Murasoli Maran, a month after Mr. Alexander Downer's visit, went to Australia and held further detailed talks in regard to expanding commerce and trade ties.

SHRI C.P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU: When Mr. Alexander Downer visited India, you had a dialogue with him. I would like to know whether any discussions where held with regard to CTBT and whether you agreed or refused to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. My next question is, on 12th April, Shri Murasolli Maran visited Australia and had discussions with the Trade Marks Minister there. As a result of the discussion, I would like to know whether the sanctions imposed by the Australian Government will be revoked or not?

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: There are again two parts of the query . With your permission, Sir, I will take the second part first which relates to the visit by thy hon. Commerce Minister to Australia. Now, strictly, it is a question that he sould reply, but because the hon. Memebrs has taken the trouble to ask me, I might just throw a little light on the subject. So far as the trade sanctions are concerned, Australia did, certainly, in post-May 1998, announce the imposition of sanctions against India. But even after announcing the sanctions, like USA had done, Australia did not restrict any of its trading activity with India. It, in fact, continued to encourrage; not simply the continuance of trade, but encouraged it to expand, as far as possible. As to whether, during Shri Murasoli Maran's visit the question of sanctions were duscussed between Shri Murasoli Maran and his counterpart it, it really a matter of detail which you should ask from him, and I am sure he will benefit you with the reply. On the second aspect, Sir, with your permission, if I might answer, it really relates to whether the

question of Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and subscription to that treaty was taken up between Alexander Downer and myself. Australia, as know, since May 1998, has taken a certain postion on non-proliferation issue. This is a position which is a traditional position. We can hold a different view; and, indeed, we do hold a different view. We expressed a different view. I explained to Mr. Downer that India's position remains as it was announced by both the Prime Minister and myself at the UN General Assembly, and as repeated by the Prime Minister on a number of occasions in Parliament. Australia, earlier, had taken a rigid stand, which was a stand marked by some prescriptive message to India and demands on India. It is all now a thing of the past. Austrlia continues to hold a certain viewpoint in regard to non-proliferation. India continues to hold a different viewpoint: and it is our endeavour to explain to each other the viewpoints that we hold, which are born of national consideration,s and attempts to bring the distance between the two points as close as possible.

श्री एस.एस. अहलुवालिया: माननीय सभापति जी, मैं आप के माध्यम से माननीय मंत्री जी से जानना चाहूंगा कि आए दिनों अखबारों में देखा जाता है मेलबॉर्न यूनिवर्सिटी या आस्ट्रेलिया की बहुत सारी यूनिवर्सिटीज के साथ समझौता कर के भारत में शिक्षा देने के एक परंपरा चली है और बहुत सारी इंस्टीट्यूशंस ने ऐसे समझौते किए हैं। तो क्या शिक्षा के योगदान के बारे में आस्ट्रेलियन गवर्नमेंट या आस्ट्रेलियन फॉरेन मिनिस्टर के साथ कोई चर्चा हुई है? मान्यवर, मेरे प्रश्न का भाग 'ख' जो 'सी' पार्ट से संबंधित है, वह यह है कि सी.टी.बी.टी. के बारे में और पोखरन टेस्ट के तहत बहुत सारी चर्चाएं हुई हैं, क्या आस्ट्रेलियन गवर्नमेंट ने इंडिया को एज ए न्यूक्लियर बावर रिकॉग्राइज करने के लिए अपनी मंशा जाहिर की है?

श्री जसवंत सिंह: सभापति जी, माननीय सदस्य को दो प्रश्न हैं। एक तो भारत आस्ट्रेलिया शिक्षा संबंधी बातचीत के बारे में है। डाउनर साहब से संक्षेप में शिक्षा संबंधी बातचीत हुई थी। भारत के कई विद्यार्थी, जैसी कि आप को जानकारी है, अभी आस्ट्रेलियाई विश्वविद्यालयों में हैं। इसके अतिरिक्त आस्ट्रेलियाई कंपनियां आजकल भारत से, क्योंकि उनकी अपनी जनसंख्या कम है और उन की दूसरी दिक्कतें हैं, कई शिक्षित लोगों को विशेषकर इनफॉरमेंशन टैक्नॉलोजी के क्षेत्र में रिक्रूट करने की बहुत पहल करती हैं। साथ ही सर्विस इंडस्ट्री मसलन होटल्स में भी रिक्रूट करती हैं। सभापति जी, यह संक्षेप में श्री डाउनर के साथ बातचीत हुई है। कोई विस्तृत बातचीत नहीं हुई है और अभी जैसे मुझे सूचना दी गयी है करीब साढ़े 9 हजार विद्यार्थी भारत के आस्ट्रेलिया में है। वैसे चार साल पहले भारत का कोई विद्यार्थी आस्ट्रेलिया में नहीं था। तो यह जो बढ़त हुई है, यह चार साल में ही हुई है और आस्ट्रेलिया में हमारे विद्यार्थी एक तो भाषा की अनुकूलता और दूसरा वातावरण ज्यादा सुविधाजनक होने से प्रसन्न है।

सभापति जी, जहां तक न्यूक्लिअरवेपन स्टेट का संबंध है, यह न्यूक्लिअर वेपन स्टेट अपने आप में नॉन-प्रोलिफिरेशन ट्रीटी की वजह से है और आस्ट्रेलिया से न तो हम को अपेक्षा थी और न यह प्रश्न उन के साथ उठा क्योंकि जो यथार्थ है वह दुनिया देख रहीं है और उस यथार्थ पर भारत सरकार चल रही है।

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: The main interest of the Australian, like that of many other countries, is the enormous consumer market that India provide. As far as India and Australia are concerned, the balance of trade is adverse, roughly in the ratio of 5;1 in favour of Australia. The interest of the Australians, like that of the US and New and Zealand, is in vegetables and agricultural produce. I would like to know the steps that the Government has taken to see to it that farmers are, therefore, not affected and our agricultural self-sufficiency is protected from this onslaught.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: With your permission, Sir, let me disabuse the mind of the hon. Member: there is no onslaught from Australia. The hon. Member is correct that there is a great mismatch in the trading figures between India and Australia and this mismatch is in Australia's favour. This mismatch is born, argely, on account of the strength that the Austrelian minerals have because we are importing them; it is largely a mismatch born of our dependence on certain kinds of Australian minerals.

The fact of the matter is, Australian exports to India is roughly 1.5 billion dollars and Indian exports to Australia is only 500 million dollars. So, the ratio is not as what is suggested — 5:1 I am not scoring over you, but I just wanted to make this small point. The ratio between 1:5 billion and half-a-billion by itself is significant enough. Even though it might not be 1:5 the fact remains that Australia has certain strength in minerals.

So far as agriculture is concerned, like vegetables and greens, as cited, I can assure the hon. Member that the tariff barriers against such imports are so structured by the Government that there is no way that any import of Australian foodgrains or fruits or other materials can take place at the cost of Indian producers or to the detriment of Indian agriculture.

***463.** *[The question (Shri Dilip Singh Judev) was absent. For Answer, vide page 24 infra.]*